



PHOTO: AFP

Janko Tipsarevic of Serbia celebrates after beating Britain's Andy Murray during their Dubai Open second round match on Wednesday. Tipsarevic won the match 7-6, 4-6, 6-4.

DUBAI OPEN More stars sink

Tennis AFP, Dubai

The cull of leading players at the Dubai Open continued in spectacular fashion as Australian Open finalist Andy Murray, Nikolay Davydenko, and Jo-Wilfried Tsonga all fell in the second round on Wednesday.

tactical combinations had contributed to his exit. The world number three from Britain was beaten by yet another Serbian, Janko Tipsarevic, whose thrillingly unpredictable 7-6 (7/3), 4-6, 6-4, success followed a dramatic see-saw path and had a great finish.

down the line which opened up the court for a successful net attack. "I don't want to sound like a hero, but I did think of not playing the tournament," said Tipsarevic.

ACA stays upbeat

CRICINFO, undated

The Australian Cricketers' Association remains hopeful that its IPL security requirements can be met despite Lalit Modi's blunt criticism of players' concerns this week.

MCC bids

FROM PAGE 17

but that has so far proved little more than speculation. It would be a major boon for the MCC, and chief executive Keith Bradshaw travelled alongside Anthony Wreford, a trustee of the club, to India for a weekend of talks with consortium members and IPL officials.

Taibu promises hard cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Zimbabwe may be underdogs for the upcoming limited-overs series against West Indies, but batsman Tatenda Taibu has said the team will be aiming to "play hard cricket" and win games.

team had a good mixture of youth and experience in the 15-man squad and would perform well. He said Stuart Matsikenyeri and captain and offspinner Prosper Utseya, who have played 105 and 101 ODIs respectively, would be key to their fortunes.

Immortal

FROM PAGE 17

Don Bradman, saying the Mumbai man was the "greatest batsman the game has ever seen." Newspapers highlighted Australian spin legend Shane Warne's tweets as he followed the knock of one of his close friends.

The pavilion at the Roop Singh Stadium in Gwalior where Tendulkar achieved the feat will be named after him, the Press Trust of India reported.

Mashrafe flat on return

FROM PAGE 17

will try to give my hundred per cent." Mashrafe was not bothered at all about the speed or the lack thereof during the game. "I did not bowl at a great speed. But that does not bother me. Most important thing is I bowled a good line and length which is what matters in one-day cricket. I think I bowled at 122-125kms today [Wednesday]. I am expecting to generate 10 more kilometres in the future."

team's chances against mighty England. "It's hard to predict what the result might be. But I'm confident we will do better against them than in the two previous series. Tamim, Imrul at the top order are batting well so are Shakib, Mushfiqur and Riyad down the order. If one or two players in the middle order can score big, we can put them (England) under pressure."

of-form batsman Mohammad Ashraful. "Ashraful is an asset for us. We need him to play well for the whole team. We should all help him to find his feet. It's up to the selector's to decide whether he should be in the team or not, but I think he should be there."

Gayle leaves for mother

AFP, Port of Spain

West Indies captain Chris Gayle has been granted "compassionate" leave to be with his sick mother and has not been dropped from the squad, West Indies Cricket Board chief executive Ernest Hilaire said Wednesday.

"Chris Gayle went to Australia, and while there, his mother was ill, and he had to come back," said Hilaire. "We thought, in discussion with him, that he should probably go home for a few days to see his mother, to be with her, then join the team in Guyana."

Aussie-NZ

FROM PAGE 17

last year but only because Ricky Ponting was being rested. New Zealand have named a 12-man squad, which makes their selections relatively easy.

Dirk Nannes was rested from the final Twenty20 against West Indies but expect him to return to form a very fast opening combination with Shaun Tait. Ryan Harris could be squeezed out despite making a good debut on Tuesday, or the selectors might decide to give Mitchell Johnson a rest.

TEAMS AUSTRALIA (possible): Shane Watson, David Warner, Michael Clarke (captain), David Hussey, Cameron White, Brad Haddin (wk), Daniel Christian, Steven Smith, Mitchell Johnson, Dirk Nannes, Shaun Tait. NEW ZEALAND (possible): Brendon McCullum (wk), Peter Ingram, Martin Guptill, Ross Taylor, Jacob Oram, Gareth Hopkins, James Franklin, Daniel Vettori (captain), Nathan McCullum, Shane Bond, Daryl Tuffey.

WI get Shiv boost

Cricket AFP, Port of Spain

Shivnarine Chanderpaul is one of four players who will return to the West Indies' line-up for Sunday's Twenty20 International against Zimbabwe at Queen's Park Oval.

The evergreen left-hander is back from an injury lay-off that allowed him to nurse the fractured thumb he sustained in a Test against Australia last December.

"I am feeling okay," he told the Trinidad Express newspaper. "The thumb just needs to be tested at the higher level to see where we are."

Chanderpaul and the other returning players have boosted the West Indies line-up that was severely depleted for the recent limited-overs series in Australia.

Left-arm spinner Suleiman Benn has rehabilitated the left knee he wrecked in the recent Tests while opener Adrian Barath's hamstring has healed, and left-handed batsman Darren Bravo, Dwayne Bravo's younger brother, has recovered from a shoulder injury.

Chanderpaul immediately got down to business, leading his native Guyana to their first victory in the West Indies first-class championship in the last three seasons with a five-wicket triumph over Leewards Islands on Monday at the National Cricket Centre here.

He made 105 not out in the first innings and 32 not out in the second. He clocked eight hours, seven minutes in the middle -- not the most ideal preparation for the frenetic pace of the limited-

overs formats -- but appropriate for someone returning from a thumb injury.

"As a batsman, it is always good to get some runs behind you, especially going into an international tournament," said Chanderpaul.

"It helps with your confidence. It helps to build you up, and if you are going into the One-day International and Twenty20 International formats, you need to have runs behind you."

Chanderpaul's return follows the side's horrific trip to Australia, where no less than seven seasoned players -- including himself -- were missing through injury.

As a result, a series of five one-day internationals and two Twenty20 Internationals was a "no-contest", and Australia convincingly swept both series.

"It is pretty tough out there," said Chanderpaul. "It is never easy against Australia. They are on a high. They have been playing good cricket, and even Pakistan went down there and struggled to win a match."

"It is never easy there, but you still have to give the guys support, and make sure when we come home, we put that behind us as quickly as possible because we have tournaments in front of us."

"We need to move forward, and we need to look ahead at these matches here. Zimbabwe is here. We have to try and get some wins from Zimbabwe, and gain some confidence going into the Twenty20 World Cup (to be hosted in the Caribbean from April 30 to May 16)."

Sunday's T20I is the first between the two sides since the format gained international status six years ago, and West Indies have never lost a bilateral ODI series against these opponents.

Respect comes first

Cricket AFP, St John's

New West Indies coach Otis Gibson has set earning the respect of his players as a major goal during their brief series against Zimbabwe.

Gibson was speaking at an official unveiling in the island of St. Lucia, where the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) president Julian Hunte has an office.

"I need to explain to them what they can expect from me first of all, and what I expect from them as the players," said Gibson.

"We need to have that contact time. They need to know they can trust me, but I also need to know I can trust them because it is a two-way street."

Gibson shocked the cricket World last month, when he gave up a comfortable job as England bowling coach to become the new coach of the beleaguered West Indies side that has flagged internationally for the last 15 years.

The last few weeks would have given the former Barbados and West Indies fast bowler a reality check about the enormity of the challenge that faces him.

West Indies return to the Caribbean on Thursday from a horrific trip to Australia, where they failed to win any of the five One-day Internationals or two Twenty20 Internationals

they played Down Under.

"The players will be low in confidence based on what happened recently in Australia," said Gibson.

"We have a game on Sunday in Trinidad, and the players get back on Thursday, so we literally have two days to get together as a group, for me to meet the team, and have some contact time with them."

As bowling coach of England, Gibson is fully aware of how jarring criticism can be, but he was philosophical about handling the pressure that would come if he cannot halt the terminal decline of one of World cricket's brightest brands.

"I don't know if you can ever be mentally prepared for criticism," he said. "I know it is going to come."

"It is going to be a lot of work to start winning again. A lot of work goes into actually winning anything. I am committed to that work, and if we get the preparation right, there is no reason why we can't start winning again."

West Indies face Zimbabwe in a single Twenty20 International this coming Sunday at Queen's Park Oval in the Trinidad & Tobago capital.

They then tackle the Zimbabweans in five ODIs which will be followed by the Twenty20 World Cup in the Caribbean, starting in April, and then three Tests and five ODIs against South Africa, starting in May.



PHOTO: STAR

Grameenphone's head of communications Amir Ashraf (2nd from L) addresses a press conference organised in connection with the 24th Bangladesh ITF Junior Tennis at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 "Deal or No Deal" choice 5 Corral 8 Caffeinated nut 12 Bellow 13 Genetics 14 Rhyming 15 Boleyn 16 Doctrine 17 Deli loaves 18 Mass confusion 20 Quite some time 22 Hunting time 26 Polish 29 \$ dispenser 30 Leading lady? 31 Safe-cracker 32 Honest politician?

Grid for crossword puzzle with numbers 1-55.

CRYPTOQUIP X K M S I Y Z X N R Q V I Y I X X M B T I O T M Y M D X B T N Y O T X O X L C M I F N X O Z R V T Y S T B N Q N F S X : " S M L T O C O C N D K M N . " Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF FIXING THINGS UP MAKES YOU EXTREMELY NERVOUS, YOU LIKELY ARE HAVING REPARATION ANXIETY. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals G